

II. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for sharing network access capacities between a master service provider, comprising at least one point of presence, and a client service provider, said method comprising the steps of:

- upon reception of an access request, including at least a subscriber identifier, a service provider identifier and a password, at said at least one point of presence:

- determining, according to said service provider identifier, if said access request comes from a subscriber of said master service provider or from a subscriber of said client service provider, said access request being rejected otherwise;

- if said access request comes from a subscriber of said master service provider,
 - determining, using said subscriber identifier and said password, if said subscriber is authorized to establish a connection; and,

- if said subscriber is authorized, establishing a connection, else, rejecting said access request;

- else, if said access request comes from a subscriber of said client service provider,

- determining if a new connection may be established for a subscriber of said client service provider; and,

- if a new connection may be established, sending an authorization request, comprising at least said subscriber identifier and said password, to said client service provider, else, rejecting said access request;

- upon reception of an authorization acknowledgment, comprising said subscriber identifier, from said client service provider:

- if said subscriber is authorized, establishing a connection, and sharing network access capacity across the established connection between the master service provider and the client service provider

- else, rejecting said access request.

2. (Original) The method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of replacing said subscriber identifier and said password by a virtual subscriber identifier and a virtual password, associated to said service provider identifier, when said access request comes from a subscriber of said client service provider, before determining if a new connection may be established for a subscriber of said client service provider.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of determining a duration of the connections established by subscribers of said client service provider.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of determining a number of simultaneous connections established by subscribers of said client service provider.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining if a new connection may be established for a subscriber of said client service provider is based upon a number of ports allocated to said client service provider.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining if a new connection may be established for a subscriber of said client service provider is based upon a connection time threshold associated with said client service provider.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1 implemented in a RADIUS proxy, using RADIUS protocol.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said service provider identifier is a realm.
9. (Original) An apparatus comprising means adapted for carrying out the method according to claim 1.
10. (Cancelled).